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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAKAR 000436

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W AND AF/RSA

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TAGS: [KOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PU](#) [XY](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: SENEGAL: CHIEF OF DEFENSE ON GUINEA-BISSAU AND THE CASAMANCE

REF: A. A) PRAIA 57
[1](#)B. B) PRAIA 63

Classified By: Classified by AMB Marcia Bernicat for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request: See paragraph 10.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Although the situation in the Casamance region of Senegal is calm at the moment, the Senegalese Chief of Defense General Abdoulaye Fall expressed concern about the potential for recent events in Guinea-Bissau to destabilize the region, including the possibility of rebels being co-opted by narcotics traffickers. The Chief of Defense said the independence war veterans and the tendency of Bissau-Guinean defense chiefs to interfere in politics are the source of instability in the country. To stop the trend, Fall said a group of senior West African military officers should be sent to Guinea-Bissau in the lead up to presidential elections. The presence of the officers would help to ensure that civilian authorities are able to select the next armed forces chief of staff without undue pressure from the Balanta military officers who make up the military commission currently in command of the armed forces. This monitoring group could also increase the likelihood for successful implementation of security sector reform. End summary.

[1](#)3. (C) On March 12, the Ambassador, DATT Madden and Security Cooperation Chief Clemmons met with Fall to discuss the recent events in Guinea-Bissau and security in the Casamance region. In addition, Fall raised Senegal's participation in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (see paragraph 9).

The Casamance Region is Calm for the Time Being

[1](#)4. (C) While acknowledging the potential for recent events in bordering Guinea-Bissau to destabilize the Casamance, Fall described the security situation in the southern Senegalese region as stable at the moment. He indicated that the army was heavily deployed towards the north and also deployed towards the south and the east where efforts were ongoing in Zone 5 (Ziguinchor) and Zone 6 (Kolda). Fall commented that recent Senegalese army efforts had focused on protecting traffic on the national highway from banditry. Fall did note that the military was having some trouble securing the western littoral area of the Casamance; asserting this was largely due to a lack of means to patrol the coastal bayous and inlets (Note: The Senegalese have requested boats and support to build naval infrastructure. End note). Fall said operating in this area was a challenge for them and that they needed to upgrade their efforts there. While describing the situation in the region as largely under control, he acknowledged the potential for the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance (MFDC) to be infiltrated and suborned

by narcotics and arms traffickers.

15. (C) At one point, Fall started to contend that the solution for the crisis is for the MFDC to simply disarm, but then he paused, reflected and commented that it would be necessary for someone to start a process to discuss a political resolution as well with the MFDC. Waiving aside the possibility of any potential Senegalese concerns about UN interference in internal matters, he strongly asserted that a U.S. initiative to assist in the demobilization of the remaining MFDC armed elements would likely be a welcome offer. Fall shared his belief that there were only between 200 and 1,000 armed militants remaining. He thought that many of those were turning to banditry.

Independence Veterans Source of Troubles in Guinea-Bissau

16. (C) Segueing to Guinea-Bissau, Fall indicated that he shared the Ambassador's perception of events there. He opined that problems in Bissau will continue until a strong executive is in place. He argued that the Bissau-Guinean military must restrict themselves to management of the armed forces and stay out of the political domain. Fall maintained that the generation of former liberation fighters still in uniform was the root of the problem. He said that these old guerillas should follow the example of their former comrades-in-arms from Cape Verde. Those fighters have left the armed forces to make way for the younger generation, whom they trained well, to take the reins. Whatever influence those old guerillas may continue to wield, it is exerted from outside of the military. According to him, former

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Bissau-Guinean Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Tagme Na Wai and his predecessors Ansumane Man and Verissimo Correia Seabray had all exceeded their proper military roles by intervening inappropriately in the political arena. As a result, each of them was killed in the resultant instability.

Fall opined the same will occur to Captain Zamora Induta, leader of the military commission commanding the armed forces at present and the likely successor to Na Wai, unless he changes course and submits to the authority of the constitutionally elected leaders. Worse yet, Fall lamented, this lack of control by the civilians has exacerbated the infiltration of the government by narcotics traffickers.

International Assistance Needed for Guinea-Bissau

17. (C) Fall then discussed his views on the way forward for the international community vis--vis Guinea-Bissau outlining three tasks. First, he argued for international assistance with the upcoming presidential elections and shared the opinion expressed by other observers that the main objective would be to hold them before the rainy season began in June vice a potentially limiting insistence on the 60-day schedule, as called for by the constitution. Next he called for assistance to restore economic growth. (FYI - Fall noted that the Senegalese Armed Forces had evacuated a team from the International Monetary Fund that was in Bissau to negotiate an Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance (EPCA) package in the wake of the assassinations). He concluded by underlining the overarching importance of Security Sector Reform (SSR) to obtaining political stability in the country. An essential first step of SSR would be to Disarm, Demobilize and Re-integrate (DDR) the Independence era fighters. Pointing to an overwhelming consensus on this point, he noted that Brazil had offered to assist with the reinsertion of 30 senior Bissau-Guinean officers and added that ECOWAS had also pronounced on the need for SSR. Fall agreed that the selection of Navy Captain Zamora Induta as interim armed forces chief of staff by the self-appointed ad hoc military committee currently acting in place of the official chain of command (which he described as little more than a clique of influential Balanta officers) was entirely inappropriate. To

limit the political interference of Zamora and the Balanta officers supporting him, Fall opined that it would be best if a handful of senior military officers, including a general officer, from the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) could be on the ground in the run-up to the upcoming election. (Note: Subsequently, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) has expressed support for the provision of a stabilization force with a mandate from the United Nations and the African Union. End noted.)

MINURCAT

¶18. (C) Separately, Fall expressed his gratitude for the strong USG support for Senegal's peacekeeping efforts. He specifically thanked the Ambassador for the ACOTA training and equipment support and for the vehicles provided to their African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) battalion in 2008. After noting a laundry list of other U.S. military bilateral programs with Senegal, he reiterated a comment he made in summer 2008 that the United States is now Senegal's most important strategic partner. Noting that France and Morocco had at previous times been their lead partner, he said he was pleased to see the United States surpass their levels of support. The Ambassador praised Senegal's dedication to the peacekeeping mission and stated military cooperation is one of the pillars of the bilateral relationship.

¶19. (C) With regard to peacekeeping operations, Fall reported that Senegal would be providing the Force Commander position for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). However, this was awkward for Senegal, he commented, because Senegal had not been able to meet the requirements for the UN's request for a rotary wing unit to serve in MINURCAT. (Note: The Senegalese Armed forces possess two Mi8 HIP and two Mi35 HIND helicopters. End Note.) Fall indicated that Senegal could not support the level of troops requested either. However, he concluded by saying that Senegal would find a way to provide a unit to MINURCAT, given their Force Commander position.

¶11. (C) COMMENT: Fall had just returned from the ECOWAS Chiefs of Defense conference in Praia, consequently Post believes his perceptions of the way ahead in Guinea-Bissau may be shared by other key military leaders in ECOWAS. Moreover, Post sees merit in a senior ECOWAS presence in

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Bissau as the election nears and especially during the implementation of security sector reform. This would be a welcome first step for West Africa to take to influence the Bissau-Guinean military to recognize the authority of duly elected leaders. Specifically, a senior ECOWAS/CPLP military presence could be an ideal vehicle for delivering the message to Induta that the military should not impose a candidate for armed forces chief of staff on the newly-elected president.

¶12. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Post recommends that the United States engage with ECOWAS, the CPLP, and key member states to build support for an eventual ECOWAS/CPLP role in Bissau, and that the USG provide financial support for sending a mission consisting of a small number of senior ECOWAS and CPLP officers. Enabling the elected leaders of Guinea-Bissau to select the armed forces chief of staff is an absolutely critical step for an eventual demobilization and baseline reform of this corrupt and ethnically divisive military. Post also recommends the Department explore with USAID and the Department of Defense the possibility of obtaining 1207 funds to support directly the SSR, and in particular, the DDR process.
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